

The Closed Gentian

By Virginia Lella Wentz
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The serious business of settling up
her brother's estate was about finished.
Miss Morton leaned wearily back in
her invalid's chair and sighed. After
all, she was sorry. Doubtless it
would mean a cessation of her lawyer's
frequent and periodic visits.
And well, he had been something new
under her sun.

"I leave for Bar Harbor tomorrow,
to be gone a week. On my return I'll
send you a telegram and arrange for our
final interview." Howell Orchard's crisp,
staccato sentences punctured her reverie.
He was picking up his gloves. A high cart had just driven
under the porte-cochere, and Miss
Morton's liveried groom was busy
quieting the antics of a pair of brown
cobs.

Miss Morton groped for a pretext to
spin out the call of her lawyer—if only
for five minutes. It was stupid of Peter
to have driven up so early—and so
handsome! Her eye fell on the near-
est object—a bowl of orchids.

"Exquisite, are they not?" she said,
with a slight indicating motion of her
patriarchal, blue veined hand. Orchard's
keen glance noted them, at the same
time ranging the extravagant reflec-
tion of the room.

"In keeping with their surroundings,"
Miss Morton, he rejoined, pulling on
his left hand glove. "Artistically, you
see?"

She made no further protest. It was
fatuously, but it answered her purpose.
"What is your favorite flower?" she
asked.

It was an inane question, and she bit
her lip. But, to her relieved surprise,
Orchard gave her inquiry his consider-
ation.

"The closed gentian," he said after a
slight pause.

Wynchell, Miss Morton's country
home, with its ancestral acres, was
about far enough from Jersey City to
leave time on the suburban train for a
comfortable perusal of the paper and a
yawn or two besides.

Orchard spread out his sheet mechani-
cally. But even the stock market news
didn't seem to interest him, and he
looked far beyond his paper. That was
only natural. He was looking back
through several seasons of blossoms
and snow, this man, who, young as he
was, had already begun to be called
a woman hater. The whizzing tele-
graph wires and poles passed unseen.
The noise of the engine, the rumble of
the wheels, dwindled into silence. In
their stead came the low, exquisite
voice of a girl:

"It's such a good little flower in-
side, Howell!"

The day had been full of late Sep-
tember elixir, then as now. The tread
of loveliness had been on the fields of
grass and fodder ripened by August
sun and tanned by early frosts to an
autumnal bronze. Somewhere from
among the hedge of sumac had come
the call of a quail. Then presently the
girl had stopped near a silvery stream
and plucked a plain 'enough looking
dark blue flower and pinned it on his
coat.

"It's a closed gentian, you know,
dear," she had explained, while the
soft tendrils of her hair had uncon-
sciously brushed his strong chin. "You
see," she went on, stooping to pluck an-
other, "they're not so very handsome
outside, but inside—look!" Delicately
as a spring zephyr she had pricked the
portals open. "It puts the damning
goldenrod and all the staring purple
daisies here to shame, doesn't it?" She
lifted her face to him—the face of a
girl not particularly beautiful, but glo-
rified by a dazzling smile.

He had left her at the gate of his
little western home and, leaning over
the rustic fence in the privacy of the
broad oak, had bid her goodby, for he
was going to the big eastern metrop-
olis for a year or two to win fame and
fortune for them both. He went away
with the sweetness of her kiss upon his
lips, her tear upon his cheek, her flow-
er in his coat.

Later there had come a misunder-
standing, of the slight, insignificant
sort that most young lovers have; but,
alas, in this case before the gentle,
healing wind of the real truth had
blown tragedy had visited the girl's
home, and when the man sought her
she was not to be found. Out in her
little western village people told a
tale of her father's long illness and
death—how she had nursed him night
and day with untiring tenderness; how,
their slight income being exhausted,
she had taken up water color work
and filled orders for dinner cards and
little pictures; how finally, upon his
death, she had gone to New York city
to earn her living in such fashion as
she could.

That was all Orchard had been able
to learn, and that had been two years
ago. To find a girl who does water
color work on dinner cards in New
York city is not an easy matter. By
the time his train had reached the
smoke of the tunnel the man with the
unread paper was thoroughly out of
conceit with one Emily; by the time
the ferryboat had bumped into the
slip on the New York side he was
thoroughly out of conceit with himself.

Miss Morton brought her longon to
bear upon the flowers Miss Gray had
just brought in.

"So they are what you call close."

gentians?" questioned she half incred-
ulously. "Are you sure?"

"I—I'm very sure, Miss Morton." The
girl's voice was exquisitely low and
musical.

"But they're so homely, so unfinished
looking, and I thought—well, never
mind. Arrange them there in that
vase, if you will. My lawyer, a young
fellow in whom I've taken a great
interest, is coming up to Wynchell to-
day, and they are his favorite flower."

Miss Gray lost the last of the
sentence. From the silver faucet in Miss
Morton's marble bathtub she was
drawing water for the cut glass she
had. Besides, Miss Morton had spoken
more than half to herself.

It had been only three days now that
Miss Gray had been with her in the
capacity of companion, and already
Miss Morton found herself exchanging
that young person's status from com-
panion to confidante. She had always
had a liking for her, this girl with the
tired, pale face and the sweet, sudden
smile, ever since the day when she
had come personally to explain that
there had been some little mistake in
the ordered dinner cards and to make
her apologies. It appears she had given
the dinner ladies powdered silver
hair instead of dazzling gold. That
had been at the beginning of last season.
During the present summer the
little sketches that she had been able
to sell hadn't proved sufficient for her
to eke out even a modest existence with.
Miss Morton was looking for a
companion, and she had offered her
services. That is the way it had all
come about.

There was the rhythmic thud-thud of
horses' hoofs on macadam, and Miss
Morton's brown cobs whirled through
an iron gate into a modest drive and
came to an abrupt halt under her
porte-cochere. A gray drizzle had set
in, but what did that matter to Howell
Orchard? The fine drops of rain
driven against his face by the pace of
the cobs had been an exhilarating de-
light to him, and as Miss Morton was
wheeled into the library to greet him
he was positively cordial.

Miss Morton had forgotten her long-
gnon. Being very short-sighted, she was
at a loss to know exactly where her
companion had placed the gentians.
And, above all things, should the sight of
the flowers bring an appreciable
fraction of pleasure into Orchard's im-
mobile face she didn't want to lose the
sight. She rang for a maid.

"Ask Miss Gray to fetch me my
longgnon," said she.

"So you remembered!" The exclama-
tion came from Orchard, and Miss Morton
lost the sight she had wished for,
after all. He had crossed to an ebony
cabinet on top of which stood the cut
glass vase. "Awkward things to ar-
range in vases, though," he commented
laconically, as if regretting his burst of
emotion.

"Yes, that's what my companion said.
She went out willingly enough in all
this drizzle to pluck them, but she
shied at arranging them in a vase.
She assures me they belong to the
fields and—"

But Orchard veered quickly around.
In the mirror back of the ebony cabi-
net he'd caught the reflection of a girl's
face. Before he had seen her face,
though, he had recognized her. There
was no other woman he knew who
held her head so proudly and at the
same time had that wavering little
walk so at variance with the queenly
carriage of her head.

"Emily!" he cried. "You!"

The girl's hand which held the long-
gnon clutched it tightly and went up to
her breast. The other hand groped to-
ward him, as with a little incredulous
cry she repeated the one word, "You!"

"Too bad, too bad," murmured kind-
hearted Miss Morton indifferently to
herself that evening, laying down her
Goethe unread. The day had cleared
beautifully. The last scrap of estate
settling business had been attended to,
and now her lawyer and her companion
were enjoying a bit of the mel-
low harvest moon out on the back
veranda. "Too bad! I was just begin-
ning to congratulate myself on what a
treasure Miss Gray would be in my
declining years, and now—the end of the
beginning or the beginning of the end.
Marie," she said, turning to the maid,
"take those homely blue flowers away.
Take them up to Miss Gray's room."

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STOPPED THE OVATION.

Richard Wagner's Peculiar Expert-
ise in Vienna.

When Wagner was at the height of
his popularity he visited Vienna. Baron
von Beust, then chancellor of the
empire, was informed that the Prussian
party intended to give him an immense
serenade—a serenade, which would have
the air of German protest
against the tendency of the ministry to
make the union of Hungary and Austria
more intimate. The demonstration
promised to arouse strong feeling.

"Your excellency is warned," said
the chancellor's advisers. "It is impos-
sible to stop this manifestation unless
Wagner goes away, and he loves ovations
too well. Nothing will induce him to
depart."

"You think so," said Beust, with a
smile.

An hour later Wagner was invited to
dine with the chancellor. He was flat-
tered by the invitation and accepted it.
After dinner, at which Beust was de-
lightfully amiable and entertaining, the
chancellor remarked: "Herr Wagner,
are you interested in autographs? I
have some very curious ones to show
you." And he opened a portfolio where
were letters of Palmerston, Bismarck,
Napoleon III, Heine and others.

Suddenly turning to a paper, dated
1848, he said: "Ah, look at this. It is
very curious. What would your friend
his highness the king of Bavaria say if
this paper, which would be significant
in connection with the political ser-
enade, were published tomorrow in the
Vienna paper?"

The composer examined the paper
and recognized, with surprise, an old
proclamation of one Richard Wagner,
who, an ardent revolutionist in 1848,
had proposed to the youth of that time
to set fire to the palace of the king of
Saxony. He saw his autograph and
that it might be the means of getting
him into serious trouble.

"Very curious, is it not, Herr Wag-
ner?" said the minister.

"Very curious, your excellency," re-
plied his guest.

The next morning Richard Wagner
left Vienna, recalled to Baireuth by
urgent business.—Strand Magazine.

MAKING WAMPUM.

A Process That Requires Both Pa-
tience and Skill.

With certain tribes wampum is still
highly prized and necklaces are worn
by men, women and children when
they are the fortunate possessors of them.
To make wampum various kinds
of shells are used, white and those
having a lavender hue being most liked.

The thin shells are broken into little
pieces and by aid of shapers are made
as nearly round as possible. When
each piece is drilled in the center, the
old time fire kindling style of drill be-
ing used, the shells are then strung and
rolled with the hand on a flat stone,
which grinds them until they are
smooth and even.

Comparatively few Indians among
those who prize wampum beads most
highly have the skill or patience to
make them, even though they had the
materials. The fact is there are but
few wampum bead makers in the country,
and it often happens that long pil-
grimages must be made to secure the
requisites for really fine beads, and, as
with the white man's trinkets, that
which is "far fetched and dear bought"
is most sought after for ornamentation.

Around some of the ancient ruins in
the southwest the little disks of wampum
are often found in the sand, and it
is probable that they were deposited
in the graves in very early times and
washed out or exposed by the wind's action.
These ruins are in the best
state of preservation of any in the
country. Absolutely nothing is known
of their builders, and the origin of
these ruins was as much a mystery
when Coronado first saw them in 1540,
when he made his famous invasion, as
it is to the people of the present day.—
Indian's Friend.

Oxygen and Mushrooms.

A singular way of removing oxygen
from the air by the aid of a plant is as follows: Inside a glass bell jar, sus-
pended over water, is placed a mushroom,
and sunlight is allowed to fall upon the plant. The mushroom ab-
sorbs the oxygen from the air in the
jar, and the carbonic acid formed dur-
ing the process is absorbed by the wa-
ter, which gradually rises in the jar
to one-fifth of its height. The mush-
room now dries up, but its animation
is only suspended, as may be proved
by introducing beside it a green plant,
when it will commence to vegetate,
being nourished by the oxygen exhaled
from the fresh plant.

Hope.

"Mr. Merchant," said the new clerk,
preparing to ask for more money, "I
think I understand the business pretty
well now, and—"

"Yes?" interrupted his employer.
"Well, keep it at four or five years.
Perhaps you'll understand it then as
well as you think you do now."—Philadelphia Press.

Taking Papa Down.

First Daughter—Oh, papa, dear,
two young men we've met down here
have asked us to marry them. Father
—They'd better see me first. Second
Daughter—Oh, they've seen you, papa,
and they love us notwithstanding.

A Fashion Note.

Doctor (to female patient)—You've
got a slight touch of fever. Your
tongue has a thick coat—Patient (ex-
citedly)—Oh, doctor, do tell me how it
is!

Reading is thinking with some one
else's head instead of one's own.—
Schopenhauer.

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